

World Forum for Acoustic Ecology

WFAE NEWS QUARTERLY

Donald K. Strike

October-November 2013
Volume 10, Number 4

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**WFAE President's Report by Eric Leonardson**

With this last issue of the WFAE News Quarterly for 2013 we end a busy year of transition for our organization.

The World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (WFAE) was founded twenty years ago in August 1993 at the Banff Centre for the Arts, in Alberta, Canada. The purpose of the WFAE then, and now, is to provide an international forum for affiliated groups that have formed, and continue to form around the world.

Some may wonder how the WFAE operates. It is a totally volunteer based organization. There is no paid staff. An elected representative from each WFAE Affiliate serves on the WFAE Board and assists in guiding the forum in meeting its mission as an active voice for acoustic ecology. A portion of Affiliate membership fees supports in part, the production of our annual scholarly publication, *Soundscape: The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*.

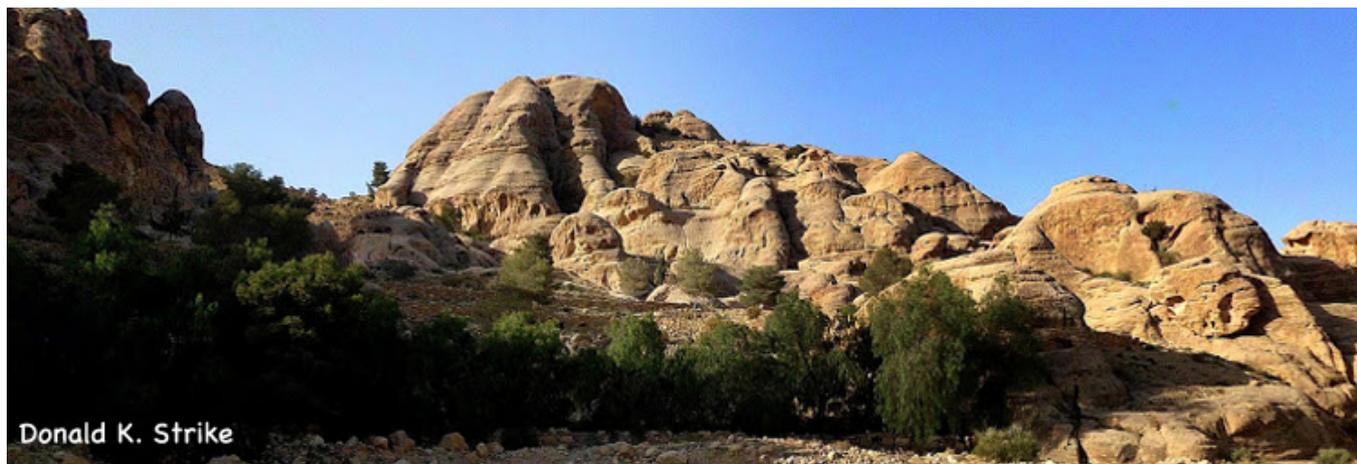
International conferences are occasionally held by WFAE Affiliates, who self-support such events, and in some cases by partnerships with our members and outside sponsors. The WFAE, as a representational body, may endorse conferences and other activities based on each organization's proposed goals and objectives. Endorsements encourage WFAE member participation and promote conference events to the broader acoustic ecology community.

Speaking of conferences, the WFAE is pleased to endorse the [Symposium on Acoustic Ecology](#) at the University of Kent 8-9 November, 2013. It is being organized by The School of Music and Fine Art and partnered with the UK and Ireland Soundscape Community ([UKISC](#)) a WFAE Affiliate. The symposium investigates soundscapes as complex sounding systems that change in space and time, and shape our understanding of the surrounding world. Guest speakers include Barry Truax (CASE), Katharine Norman, and Richard Ranft.

Membership in the WFAE is relatively and even surprisingly small compared to the global importance of the field. This is especially poignant when we are in the midst of a virtual explosion of interest in sound and the environment in its relationship to art, technology, education, and sustainability. Why this is so has as much to do with the energy of a volunteer organization as much as it does with divergent ideologies and broadening ecologies of sound. For the WFAE, where there is focus, direction and energy within an Affiliate group there is growth and development.

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Dr. Tadahiko Imada (JASE) reports that the Soundscape Association of Japan (parent organization of the JASE) will meet for its annual research seminar in Chiba, Japan, November 16, 2013, under the auspices of the Natural History Museum and Institute, Chiba. Since the SAJ is celebrating its 20th anniversary, the organizing committee is now planning to hold a special session. The theme for the session is "Soundscape Studies Considered As Interdisciplinary Studies." [Click2Read](#) more.

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**Carmen Braden** (CASE) reports that the CASE completed the transcription of keynote speeches from the 2009 Gabriola Retreat and is now in the process of translations into French, which will appear on the [CASE website](#) toward the end of October, 2013. Topics from the retreat include "World Soundscape Project", the practice of soundscape composition, and the "World Listening Project".

In other CASE related news, **R. Murray Schafer's** 80th Birthday Festschrift was distributed to contributors in Canada as well as copies to Simon Fraser University and the Canadian Music Center (where Murray`s scores are housed). It is quite a wonderful document about the impact Schafer continues to have in lives dedicated to sound around the world.

CASE is currently considering new projects and funding avenues for 2014. Pragmatically, CASE will have the option of Paypal for memberships directly on the website in the next few months and organisationally, CASE is in the process of strategic planning for the next 1-3 years.

**Matthew Griffin**, CASE Treasurer, is a musician and composer from Kitchener, Ontario, now living and working in Montreal. He earned his BFA from Simon Fraser University's School for the Contemporary Arts and his MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He is currently the co-Artistic Director and head curator for Electricity is Magic an arts organization and art gallery that aims to present a wide array of exploratory work by sonic and new media artists. Electricity is Magic is proud to release the debut solo record by improviser **Nigel Taylor**. His "Dictionary of Symbols" will be accompanied by a late September album release party in Montreal.

**Andrea Dancer**, CASE Chair, was interviewed by the CBC`s London correspondence, Emma Bider, about the origins and current state of Acoustic Ecology in Canada. Here's an excerpt of the response to the question: What is your definition of a soundscape?

"Murray Shafer's definition is "a sound environment," but that doesn't express the complexity and mutability of sound. It's a good base line. For me, the soundscape is the listener-to-sound relationship in the environment toward an ecology of sound. I've thought a lot about this and if there is sound but no listeners, human or creature, then it is a thing unto itself. The listener experience is pivotal to sound because the listener is the entity that receives the sounds as a totality, and it is the listener whose listening habits define the space."

The conversation is part of a program still under consideration with the CBC.

**Barry Truax** writes regarding the Glenfraser Endowment at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, B.C., Canada. He notes that the fund was established in December 2009 by he and Guenther Krueger to promote the work of the [World Soundscape Project](#) and acoustic communication research that has been active at SFU for the past 40 years. The initial use of the fund has been to sponsor the annual R. Murray Schafer Soundscape Award for student(s) at SFU who demonstrate high academic achievement, skills and interest in soundscape studies/composition or acoustic communication. The 2013 award winners of \$1000 each were Jennifer Schine and Mark Nazemi, both graduate students at SFU.

Last year the Endowment added a new award, called the Glenfraser Acoustic Communication Research Award, which is to support an SFU student's research project and/or its dissemination as a publication or conference presentation. This year, \$2000 was distributed for projects by **Miles Thorogood**, **Jennifer Schine**, **Nathan Clarkson** and **Milena Droumeva**. Anyone wishing to support this award is welcome to make a donation, either to the annual award or else to the endowment itself. For further information, contact Erin Geary, SFU Advancement at: [egeary@sfu.ca](mailto:egeary@sfu.ca)

**Randolph Jordan** has been working on a project with Barry Truax over the past year as part of his postdoctoral research with the World Soundscape Project (WSP) at SFU. As an aid to comparative analysis across the Vancouver Soundscape Project's three iterations, he and Barry Truax are mapping the positions of all recordings in the WSP archive that revisit key locations over the last 40 years. The map and details are [now online](#).

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Susan Frykberg posts that the AFAE is in good heart with 17 members and an AGM coming up, October 9th, to which all are welcome. She reports that **AFAE members** have been, or will be, active in a number of events as follows.

[Hearing JaaraJaara2013](#), a digital/acoustic sanctuary on line, air and site, and is a profile of the box ironbark forest in Central Victoria, Australia. It includes a sonic calendar of the aboriginal seasons and a free performance by Musicians **Kinja**, **Ros Bandt** with **Le Tuan Hung**, (DanTranh) **Wang Zeng ting**, (sheng) and **Mary Doumani** (Harp). The public event associated with it is at 3:30 on November 3, 2013 and includes a welcome to country at the Fryerstown school, a CD and website launch and a quiet walk to hear the live performance and sonic celebration of box iron bark bushland.

Leah Barclay's Biosphere Soundscape project recently hosted **Francisco Lopez** for a field recording master class in the Noosa Biosphere Reserve. This was the first in a new Biosphere Soundscapes workshop series that will launch in 2014. Leah's latest project ZAMEEN is currently touring Australia featuring at the Parramasala International Arts Festival. Composed entirely with environmental field recordings from North India, this is the first major outcome from The DAM(N) Project, an interdisciplinary performance exploring global water security through the lives of displaced communities in the Narmada Valley of North India. Zameen is accompanied by live projections and contemporary dance pulling you into the heart of a remote Indian community fighting for their way of life.

Catherine Clover's [B is for Bird, C is for City](#) was a site specific response and focused on the seagulls living around the Norla Dome at the Mission to Seafarers, central Melbourne, as part of Liquid Architecture 13: Sonic City. It consisted of field recordings followed by live performance by three Melbourne performers **Penny Baron**, **Vanessa Chapple** and **Kate Hunter**. The field recordings comprised seagulls calling, human voices reading to the gulls and field recordings of both human and gull voices. The live component consisted of the three performers reading from the field guides and imitating

the gulls' voices, echoing some of the content in the field recordings, not unlike a process of call and response.

Susan Frykberg's [A Day of Hours](#) is part of the new RMIT University Sound Art Collection, Sound Bites City, the first of its kind in Australia. Sound Bites City will offer audiences the chance to experience 19 new and significant works by Australian and international sound artists. The exhibition takes place in the Torus - an exciting circular structure that has been specially designed by architects, engineers and sound designers based in RMIT's SIAL unit to provide the best way to exhibit sound. RMIT's [Sound Art Exhibition](#) runs from September 4th to October 19th in Melbourne, Australia.

Jordan Lacey offers a transformed listening experience in Subterranean Voices at The Trench, a cavernous underground space filled with the sounds of sewerage pipes and nearby Flinders Train Station. Lacey presents pre-recordings of the site, in the site itself, thereby transforming it spatially, spectrally and temporally. Part of the Liquid Architecture Festival, Subterranean Voices encourages the listener to attend to the trench's sonic attributes: its cavernous reverb, its extraordinary dynamic range, (from the blast of train horns to the delicate drippings within the pipes), and its spectral bias that is a consequence of its shape and the materials with which it is constructed. Subterranean Voices uses Max patches, an eight-speaker sound system and the software programs Ableton, Reaper, WasP [(C) SIAL Sound] and Metasynth. Subterranean Voices was presented a number of times during the weekend of August 31st and September 1, 2013, as part of the [Liquid Architecture Festival, 2013](#).

Catherine Meeson is working on a soundscape composition that mimics a virtual soundwalk through an idealized, balanced eco-sound-system. The experience takes the listener into an Oriental Temple Garden Complex, to be greeted by musicians and absorbed in the sound world within. Afterwards, they are returned into the garden for contemplation and reflection. Catherine's approach to soundscape composition incorporates therapeutic and moving elements of sound as well as music. It is inspired by notions from acoustic ecology, ethnomusicological soundscape studies, cross cultural wisdom teachings on interrelation, the sanctity of life belief as it is embodied in person and place relations, and musical healing systems from a variety of cultures.

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**Jay Needham** has posted this update on activity within the American Society for Acoustic Ecology (ASAE) and its chapter members:

**Eric Leonardson** will perform with Hamburg-based trumpet-player, Birgit Ulher on 8pm on Wednesday, October 9, at Bond Chapel, 1025 East 58th St., Chicago. The free concert is hosted by the Renaissance Society. Then on October 22nd Eric and his students at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago present/host/lead a special 2-hour interactive sound workshop at Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art. Eric notes that, "We are interested in the actively engaging people in the ways that sounds from all around create an environment, a sense of place, recorded sounds can are familiar a medium of exchange, transmission, communication, and art." A final note, **Eric, Christopher Preissing**, and **Julia Miller** (Auris Trio) have released a CD with Bay Area percussionist Gino Robair, entitled "Rub". A split release with [Public Eyesore/Pan Y Rosas](#).

**Stephan Moore** will perform in concert as a part of, *IMMERSION: an occasion of sound and movement* at 4pm on Sunday October 6, 2013 at the [Jane Bailey Memorial Garden](#). The event will feature three collaborative performances between BodyStories: Teresa Fellion Dance and sound artists **Carver Audain, Richard Garet**, and Stephan Moore. The event will be staged outdoors and is free to the public. The event is sponsored, in part, by the Greater New York Arts Development Fund of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, administered by Brooklyn Arts Council (BAC).

**Jay Needham** has composed a new work based on soundscape recordings that that he has gathered in the rainforests of Panama. The work will be permanently installed in the new museum of biodiversity Panama. Designed by noted architect Frank Gehry, the newly constructed [Biomuseo](#), is scheduled to formally open in December. Needham will travel to Panama in late October to oversee final installation and to conduct ongoing research in the region in partnership with the Asociación Panamericana para la Conservación (APPC).

Soundwalker **Christopher Preissing** explored with participants the process of listening and recording on Saturday, July 13, 2013 at the Miller Woods' Paul Douglas Environmental Education Center in the [Indiana Dunes](#) National Lakeshore. The soundwalk was hosted by the MSAE-WLP. (Photo: Midwest Society for Acoustic Ecology)



Christopher also curated Proximity, the first Experiments in Space and Time project on Saturday, September 21st at Chicago's Elastic Arts Foundation. This research and performance project investigates relationships among time-based art forms and spectators. Watch for an upcoming call for proposals for future projects.

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**Contributors:** Carmen Braden (CASE), Susan Frykberg (AFAE), Jay Needham (ASAE), Tadahiko Imada (JASE), and Barry Truax (CASE).

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## WFAE: SOUND BITES

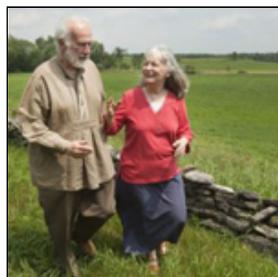
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This section includes items of interest gleaned from the press, media, blogs, and other Internet resources.



**Composing in the Wilderness.** (US-NPS) In 2012 nine composers from around the globe spent several days at a Denali National Park (Alaska) field camp with Stephen Lias and researcher Davyd Betchykal learning about the soundscapes of Denali. The compositions premiered at the Davis Concert Hall in Fairbanks, Alaska and were performed by the Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival orchestra. (Photo: US National Park Service) [Click2Read](#). Related article, "Composing in the Wilderness" by Andrew Sigler [Click2Read](#)

**Eavesdropping On Nature Gives Clues To Biodiversity.** (NPR) Biology professor Mitch Aide uses his ears to learn about the frogs, birds and insects that are all around him. This scientist at the University of Puerto Rico is trying to track how animal populations are affected by a world that's under increasing pressure from human activities. [Click2Read](#)



**R. Murray Schafer's music interwoven with nature.** (The Toronto Star) The iconoclast R. Murray Schafer's 80th was celebrated at the Stratford Summer Music Festival this summer. He's a man that makes things — pen-and-ink graphic compositions displayed in art galleries for their delicate beauty, books for adults and children, music that is performed in both concert halls and forests and even words — he coined the term "soundscape." (Photo: Fred Thrnhill - The Toronto Star) [Click2Read](#)

**Listening as a Form of Activism.** (Trickhouse) Kevin Allen, Maile Colbert, and Tessie Word have created an online multi-disciplinary exhibit focused on empowering visitors to have a dialog with the soundscape. [Click2Read](#)

**Five European Villages** (British Library) An excellent summary by writer Andrea Zarza provides an overview of the World Soundscape Project and in particular the study of five European village soundscapes. The Library has digitized copies of the original soundscape recordings. [Click2Read](#)



**A short history of Acoustic Ecology** (Banff Centre Blog) A pair of radio programs have been produced by Chris Wood, Camara Miller and Nathan Clarkson to help mark the 20th anniversary of the Tuning of the World conference that took place at Banff in 1993, and the 40th anniversary of the original Vancouver Soundscape publications. The programs discuss the history of AE and new directions in current soundscape research, featuring interviews with original WSP members Barry

Truax and Hildegard Westerkamp along with SFU doctoral and post-doctoral researchers Vincent Andrisani, Milena Droumeva, and Randolph Jordan. There's a generous helping of archival materials from the WSP collection as well. (Photo: Meghan Krauss - Banff Centre) [Click2Read/Listen](#)

**The inhuman voice.** (Radio MACBA) "There is a long history of mankind's attempts to build a machine capable of reproducing human speech. The first talking machines date from the late eighteenth century, and many theoretical advances were made during the nineteenth century. But the turning point came with the emergence of electronics in the twentieth century. You can hear an example at 20'35" of this selection: a demonstration of the Voder (Voice Operator Demonstrator) at the 1939 New York World's Fair." [Click2Read/Listen](#)

**Scientists use iPods, car batteries to build a frog surveillance net.** (Arts Technica) Scientists at the University of Puerto Rico have developed a system to monitor wildlife in tropical rainforests using captured audio in real time to remotely record the sounds made by animals. A network of radio-connected listening posts around the world allows scientists to collect data 24 hours a day. The acoustic data will help them track the effects of environmental changes—such as deforestation and climate change—on endangered species. [Click2Read](#). For a second article on this topic, [ClickHere](#).

**Wolf howl identification technology excites experts.** (BBC News) Wolves use their distinctive calls to protect territory from rivals and to call to other pack members. A team from Nottingham Trent University, UK, developed a computer program to analyze the vocal signatures of eastern gray wolves. [Click2Read/Listen](#)

**Walker Art Museum Focuses on WLD.** (Walker Calendar) The Walker Museum observed World Listening Day with activities emphasizing contemplation of the sonic environment of the Minneapolis Sculpture Garden (Minnesota, USA). Activities offered a range of aural experiments, including a listening meditation, a sound scavenger hunt, and an opportunity to hear how pop music sounds to a fish. [Click2Read](#)

**Did You Hear That? It Was Art** (New York Times) The Museum of Modern Art opens its *Soundings: A Contemporary Score* exhibit. [Click2Read](#). See also: **The Art of Noise, Explored** (Wall Street Journal) [Click2Read](#)

**New York's War on Noise** (New York Times) For more than a century, politicians and polite-sounding organizations have battled the din of New York. Browse slide shows, video and articles from the archive chronicling the never-ending quest for quiet. [Click2Read](#)



**I'm Thinking. Please. Be Quiet.** (New York Times) Around 1850, the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer pronounced noise to be the supreme archenemy of any serious thinker. "His argument against noise was simple: A great mind can have great thoughts only if all its powers of concentration are brought to bear on one subject, in the same way that a concave mirror focuses light on one point." (Photo: NY Times)

[Click2Read](#)

**Soundscapes 'enhance environment'** (BBC News) The BBC's arts correspondent, David Sillito, went on two "soundwalks" in Norfolk and London to talk about acoustic ecology on World Listening Day. [Click2Read/Listen](#)

**Interview with Annea Lockwood** by Tobias Fisher (tokafi). "Annea Lockwood once called herself a 'river fanatic'. That, she now says, may have been too strong a word. Her oeuvre encompasses a lot more than just her work with water, extending from chamber- and vocal music to electro-acoustic compositions, installations and events." [Click2Read](#)

**Limerick Soundscapes.** This exciting project will develop a rich online collection of sound, music, speech and song from all over the City of Limerick. Contributions will be made by volunteer recordists from all walks of life, capturing their sonic experience of the city. [Click2Read](#)

**DC/Baltimore Cricket Crawl 2013.** (Event) The 2013 Cricket Crawl was an evening sound census of the late summer crickets and katydids singing throughout the Baltimore/DC metro areas. [Click2Read](#)

**European Master of Arts in Sound (EMAS)** Beginning in September 2014, the European Master of Arts in Sound (EMAS) will be the first European joint master in sound and the first master in sound as an artistic discipline. Created by a consortium of European universities, film schools, art schools and arts organisations, the overall aim of the course is to produce practitioners to work in the creative industries, who are not only highly skilled but also individual, creative, critically aware, innovative and professional in their approach. By producing graduates with this combination of attributes, EMAS will fulfil its objective to enable people who have something 'to say' to communicate this effectively with their audience. [Click2Read](#)



**Tree Ring Recording.** (Blog) Recent postings on the Internet illustrate an adapted record player that plays slices of wood with the yearly growth rings of a tree translated into music. [Click2Read/Listen](#)

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**WFAE: FEATURE ARTICLE****MISCONCEPTIONS OF A SILENT NORTH**

By Carmen Braden (CASE)

The sonic environment of Canada's Far North is commonly imagined by those who have never experienced it as barren, empty and silent. This view is in stark contrast to the rich, subtle soundscape I have experienced in my time growing up and living in Yellowknife, Canada. The natural environment provides a wide variety of sounds, and so does the ever-increasing human presence. I propose that the misconception of the North as silent, vast, and empty is commonplace because of the lack of urban noise in the sparsely populated region north of the 60th parallel. This urban noise is the main soundscape for an increasing number of people, worldwide; people who are used to this urban backdrop are more likely to define the lack of it as silence.

For the purposes of this essay, I will confine my exploration of the "Northern" soundscape to the region in and around Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, spanning approximately 100 kilometers from the shores of Great Slave Lake.

The following is an excerpt from Jim Green's poem, "Powerline to Sunshine."

"dry rustling aspen leaves  
purring creek water sounds  
dawn people  
gliding in across the floors  
....  
tush-splash tush-splash  
cow moose and calf  
hooves suck popping from  
mud  
dining on lily roots"



1. Map of Canada, highlighting Yellowknife NT.

***Perceptions of Silence***

Jim Green, a poet who has lived in the Northwest Territories for over 40 years, describes some of the sounds from the North in this excerpt. (i) These sounds do not stand out as

imposing, loud, or majestic: a rustle or a purr is a quiet sonic image. They describe a soundscape that is subtle, understated, and yet clear.

In her description of the desirable high-fidelity soundscape, soundwalk artist Andrea McCartney asks, "Is it good signal to noise ratio that we are searching for, or a particular quality of silence that is comforting and inspiring, not oppressive and suffocating?" (ii) It is the human need for quiet that makes the city-dweller desire to escape to the cottage, or travel to remote, rural places. It is the inability of large gatherings of people to exist quietly that has made the urban concentrations of the south romanticize the less-populated North as a silent, sparse, empty landscape. (iii)

The highly-contested notion of silence (is it good? is it bad? does it exist at all?) compounds the complexity of considering the North as a silent soundscape. The reality of the situation should not be deduced from decibel readings or hard scientific analysis; it is in the ear of the listener.

### ***Are there any silent environments?***

The search for a truly silent environment is one that is truly subjective. What human ears hear is limited to their physiology. We might describe a place as silent simply because the sounds there are beyond our perception to hear. Even in the tomb-like space below lake ice, which is not cracking or shifting, there may be sounds from the earth, or the air above.

This hypothetical place of complete silence is a holy grail for field recorders, or city-dwellers who strive to get away from the noise of the city. This desire can explain the misconception that the North is a silent place. Those who have never been there, or even those who briefly visit assign this colonial hope to the place in the assumption that it is composed of something they are not. McCartney poses the questions: "How much silence do we want, under what conditions? Who is in control of the silence? Who can afford it?" (iv)

A listener's normal environment also shifts his or her definition of silence. Take, for example, a small mining exploration camp 100 kilometers north of Yellowknife. A person fresh off the plane from a large urban centre would describe what they hear as silence, but what they actually hear is the absence of hordes of vehicles, people, and machines. After a month on the land, that same person will have unconsciously adjusted their hearing, and can now hear waves, mosquitoes, a single bird call, voices of the prospectors or camp labourers, the camp's generator, or the buzz of a bush plane in the distance. Murray Schafer explains: "The art of the North is composed of tiny events magnified. Those accustomed to fat events that don't matter, or to many events, miss these details. To them the winter soundscape is 'silent' as snow is merely 'white.'" (v)

### ***Stereotypes of imagined soundscapes***

When forced to conjure a response to a situation one has never encountered, the natural tendency is to fall back on stereotypes or secondary sources. When listening to an imagined sound (one that we fabricated in our minds without actually hearing it), we take cues from the written or verbal descriptions made by others who have heard it, or who are themselves third parties to an actual listening experience.

For example, I have never been on sea ice in the Arctic Ocean. I have read accounts by whalers and sailors in the 19th and 20th Centuries, and have seen films where the sounds of the ice, wind, and animals are briefly heard before being masked by narration or music. I have even heard recordings made by Canadian composer and field recordist Dr. Derek Charke of sounds gathered near Iqaluit, Nunavut. All of these experiences are representations taken out of context, away from the original environment. These are all imagined soundscapes

In contrast, I have heard major cracking of fresh water lake ice on Great Slave Lake, which grows up to a 6 feet thick. If one is standing on the ice as it cracks, there is an accompanying sensation of movement and a physical impact of the sound on one's body. This unique experience is compounded by being surrounded by low temperatures, and the knowledge that you are standing on a body of frozen water. All of these qualities give the sound a context and understanding of its source, its power, and its impact. Simply hearing a recording of a sound creates an imaginary soundscape, as the listener will not be able to recreate accurately the complete sonic and physical reactions of the environment.



When I was participating in the conference *Music and the Imaginary of the North and the Cold*, this was in fact a main theme: how people who only had an imaginary experience in hearing sounds from the "North" were creating music based on these imaginations. It was also reflected in the participants, the majority of whom had not been farther north than the location of the conference, in Montreal, Canada.

2. Recording lake ice, Yellowknife, NT 2012

### ***Contrasts between an imagined soundscape and reality***

Variations in a real and an imagined soundscape can occur even when the listener is familiar with the environment. Attendance at my first professional hockey game was one example of how I arrived with an imagined soundscape in my mind. When I encountered the real setting, it was quite different than I had initially thought. I have watched hockey on television many times. The TV's audio track is a carefully mixed combination of crowd sounds, the announcer's voice, pre-recorded music, and sounds captured from the game itself. Sitting in the audience, however, was a deafening, thrilling, and at times, painful experience. The decibel level was over 100 and there was no announcer. The sounds from the game itself had a noticeable latency, as our seats were at the back of the arena. The difference between televised and live experiences was most noticeable in the sounds of the audience as tens of thousands of people unconsciously called out cheers, groans and shouts of outrage in near-perfect timing. Being within the body of humans making such a unified sound was extremely different from hearing it through a TV broadcast; to my ears it was more interesting than the game itself. The physical sonic impact of the real hockey game is, for me, the defining characteristic of the environment, and I would not have understood this if I had not experienced it firsthand.

### ***What are the dangers when academic or narrative sound studies are conducted through secondary sources?***

Academics, musicians, soundscape composers, or artists of other mediums often use second-hand sources as their inspirations for creating sound art, music or documentation. After hearing a work for string quartet entitled "Icebergs et Soleil de Minuit" (2007), I inquired of Simon Martin, the composer, where he had seen icebergs. His response was that the work was based off a contemporary painting by Jean-Paul Riopelle, who had visited the "stark northern landscape" (vi) in 1977. My debate is not with the value of these intentions or creations, but with how they are then viewed or heard as the accurate reflections of that source. The misconception of "northern" soundscapes as being silent, empty and barren is my case study for such a circumstance.

Even artists who spend time in places where they are finding inspiration for their materials may not always process the sounds they are hearing. When describing Finnish authors who attempt to create a Northern product, Juda Rindappa claims: "Some authors attained a certain northern authenticity through spending several years, even decades, as insiders in northern communities, but in many cases the main function of subjective experiences was to confirm one's own romantic and stereotypic presuppositions to entwine a feel of realism into the myths and romanticism." (vii) The danger of having artistic works or subjective information sourced in myths is that they can eventually result in an incorrect version of reality being accepted as truth.

In this sonic consideration, however, it can be argued that a mainly southern interpretation has resulted in an expectation of Northern silence. This silence, whether it is imagined, hoped for, or heard by deafened urban ears, should more accurately be described as subtlety, minimalism, or a high-fidelity environment.

### ***A personal narrative of the Northern soundscape***

In the place of the imaginary barren soundscape of the North, I offer a brief narrative discourse on the rich and sometimes noisy quality and quantity of sounds experienced in and around Yellowknife. In doing so, I acknowledge with a bitter irony that I am contributing to the cannon of second-hand knowledge being spread about the North. However, given the likelihood you as listeners or readers will travel to my home, I will try to be as subjective and accurate as possible, without becoming sterile.

The growing population of Yellowknife has led to the normal sounds that accompany urban growth such as house construction, rock-blasting, and road repair. The urban sonic environment of cities does not escape Northern towns: engines of cars, trucks and motorcycles, voices, music, bicycles, barking of dogs as pets or for dog teams, humming from streetlights, air-handling systems, power stations, even ice cream truck songs in the summer. The geographic necessities of transportation result in the inclusion of water-bombers, helicopters, snowmobiles, Bombardiers, and float planes of all types. Yellowknife is the main hub for air traffic in the Northwest Territories, which results in a staggering number of flights based out of the city on land, water and ice. It is also in the flight path for international flights whose routes take them over the North Pole or Greenland, and the soundpath for these airplanes stretches for hundreds of miles.

Iconic soundmarks of the area around Yellowknife include the ubiquitous float plane, skidoo and boat engines, the barks of dog teams, and ravens calls. Sonic warning signals blare from the gold mines and the diesel power plant to scare away ravens. The Anglican Church rings its electronic carillon at noon and five o'clock. A soundmark that has disappeared in my lifetime is the noon steam whistle from Con Mine, a now-closed gold mine on the edge of the town.

The natural soundscape can also be heard within the city, then grows louder as one travels away from human activity. Wind and water sounds are a constant, and have varying qualities as the seasons change. Winter wind is more naked and cutting, as it whips snow across the frozen lakes, and brushes through coniferous trees. Summer wind pushes through birch and poplar trees, and splashes water onto the shores of lakes. Sounds made by the snow and ice can give indication of the winter temperatures. Snow at very low temperatures crunches and squeaks, and the ice cracking on lakes makes a plethora of percussive cracks, booms, clinks, and crashes as it moves through its growth and melt cycle (as more fully described in my poster "Ice as Instrument"). Animal sounds commonly encountered include buzzing of mosquito and other insects, the calls of dozens of bird species, and the yaiping of foxes. More rare sounds include wolf howls, loon calls and the grunts of wood buffalo.

The words of Murray Schafer in *Music in the Cold* speak to this soundscape: "The art of the North is the art of restraint. The art of the South is the art of excess." (viii) In remotely populated areas the sounds created by humans occur less frequently and with less intensity. The sounds created in nature have moments of clarity and isolation. The soundscape changes seasonally, but never is completely silent. Even after a heavy snowfall there are sounds that cut through the dampening snow: footsteps, ravens, vehicles.

How does the sound of an engine affect how we listen to our environment? How does the sound of an engine affect the natural environment, especially in the North?



The ability of humans and other animals to hear high-fidelity sounds (clear distinctions between foreground, background and mid-ground sounds) diminishes as the repetitious drone of engines blurs the distinction of sound envelopes. The sounds of engines surround most of humanity. There are fewer sound-making engines in the area north of Great Slave Lake than in larger urban centers, but the prevalence of engine sounds in

the area around Yellowknife and other remote communities in Canada's northern Territories is immediately apparent nonetheless. Vehicles on air, land, snow, ice and water are the most numerous sources of engine sounds. Snow machines, Bombardiers and bush planes were only just establishing their firm foothold in the Yellowknife area in the 1940s, and by 1977 R. Murray Schafer was describing "the destruction of the quiet northern winter by the jamming of snowplows and snowmobiles." (ix) (Photo: 3. Truck on ice road)

Many communities in the Northwest Territories are exclusively powered by diesel generators, which must run constantly. These engines and motors contribute to the rise of ambient noise within towns and communities, in lakes and rivers, and along flight paths. The association of an engine sound with heat, power, supplies, or transportation has made Northerners complacent to the invasion of the natural sonic space. This is occurring at the expense of the natural soundscape. When ambient noise levels rise, the ability for animals to find food declines as more energy is spent searching; as a plane passes, the owl may

not be able to hear the rodent moving in the brush and so must fly further and longer. (x) And the rodent may not hear the fox approaching because of the cars on the highway.

In addition to engine sound creating a sense of security for basic life needs like heat and light, it also can be heard as the sound of economy. During recent summers (2008-10) when the mineral prospecting season was one of the least active in years, the amount of air traffic was also lower. Local perception of the sound of airplanes is one of prosperity, jobs, and a healthier economy. In a region where the majority of transportation to other communities and resource development (its main economy) is by air, a quiet sky is a sign of economic troubles.

### **What are common misconceptions about your local soundscape?**

The North is not alone in suffering from sonic stereotypes; they exist all over the world. How have these been propagated, and how do they differ from reality? Perhaps these impressions were realities in a different year, or in a different place. When I lived on Vancouver Island, Canada, I expected to hear the low howl of older, air pump fog horns, as these were what I had heard in movies. Instead, I heard electronic beeps sounded by automated lighthouses, altering my romantic, outdated stereotype. If some stereotypes are created from an actual sound that is heard, is this a positive or negative element of the soundscape? When I lived on the prairies, in Winnipeg, Canada, the sound of the train whistle was as common as it has been for decades. When heard in the distance, it had the effect of nostalgia, but living beside the tracks turned the sound into noise.

Are there sonic stereotypes from your own hometown or region?

### **Summary**

In conclusion, to accurately hear sounds from Canada's North, one must listen with a transparent ear that is not dulled by urban noise or deluded by southern stereotypes. A person listening through such lenses may initially identify the soundscape as 'silent'. This method is a comparison to their normal environment. If such a person is always listening with a comparing ear, the accuracy of what he or she is hearing will always be compromised. Even more dangerous, if they are listening with established expectations, their reflection on what they hear will always be tainted.

Sounds of the North can be as small, and as difficult to catch as the diamonds that push our current economy. However, that may be what makes them beautiful to hear, amazing to experience, and worthwhile to protect.

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i Jim Green, *Beyond Here* (Thistle-down Press, Saskatoon Sask., 1983), p. 17.

ii Andrea McCartney, "Ethical Questions about Working with Soundscapes," Text from keynote presentation at WFAE International Conference on Ideologies and Ethics in the Uses and Abuses of Sound. Finland (June 19, 2010), online article

iii Juda Ridanpaa, "Conceptualizing the North: Orientalism in the Arctic," *Arctic & Antarctic – International Journal of Circumpolar Sociocultural Issues* 1:1 (2007), p. 32. "The North was perceived here in a Finnish context, as an imaginative land, imagined by the southern civilization in order to justify its own existence by excluding its opposite and transferring it to a romantic dream of exoticism. The northern culture has been marginalized by the South for centuries via normative institutional practices such as science and the arts."

iv McCartney, "Ethical Questions," online article.

v R. Murray Schafer, *Music in the Cold* (The Coach House Press: Toronto, 1977), p. 6.

vi Susan Spier, "Icebergs et le soleil de minuit – Simon Martin," *Canadian Encyclopedia – the Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, online article.

vii Ridanpaa, "Conceptualizing the North," p. 25.

viii Schafer, *Music in the Cold*, p. 4.

ix R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World*, (Destiny Books: Vancouver, 1977), p. 21.

x Bjoern M. Siemers and Andrea Schuab, "Hunting at the Highway: Traffic Noise Reduces Foraging Efficiency in Acoustic Predators," *Proceedings of the Royal Society B-Biological*

*Sciences*, 278:1712. (June 7, 2011), p. 1646.

### **About the Author**



Carmen Braden is a musician and composer from Yellowknife, NWT, Canada. She works in electroacoustics as well as traditional composition. She performs on piano and voice in jazz, solo, and choral performance, as well as an accompanist for modern dance, film composer, and sound artist. Her hydrophonic work with the ice of the sub-Arctic is a current passion. Carmen is the CASE Affiliate Representative on the WFAE Governing Board.

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World Forum for Acoustic Ecology

**WFAE NEWS QUARTERLY**

Donald K. Strike

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**Thoughts on cinematic silences and visual narratives**

By Isabelle Delmotte, PhD

My recently completed practice-based PhD research establishes links between human experiences of living in sound and the practice of cinema sound design. 'Insounds': Human sonic permeability and the practice of cinema sound design within ecologies of silences' takes an enactive approach to link human permanent integration within physical and cultural sonic environments. This project has involved the altruistic participation of Australian cinema professionals. The exhibition marking the end of the research intrinsically matches its theoretical stance and is entitled *Inaudible Visions, Oscillating Silences*. Over three distinct gallery spaces, different installations integrated the work of a filmmaker, a screenwriter, eight cinema sound designers, a storyboard artist, and myself in the roles of curator and sound catcher.

With this enquiry, I questioned the human inclination to define sound as events and meaningful signals, rather than to accept that the qualities of sound generate human engagement with soundscapes. The affective properties of sound cannot be bypassed and "it takes energy to ignore sounds" (Oliveros 2011, 163), regardless of their audible, or inaudible qualities. Human habituation to the soundscapes of modernity frames consensual "silences", these frequencies that our bodies absorb and minds can at times silence. Could an artistic interpretation of environmental and narrative silences provide clues about into the dynamics of acoustic ecologies, sound habituation and audio-visual cultural practices?

To shape a film is to create a cultural medium that is physically experienced by its makers and its audiences. The sonic bed of a movie soundtrack is the result of many different tasks: its genesis and output are mostly the responsibility of sound mixers and sound supervisors as well as sound designers, although this last denomination is often difficult to pinpoint, as indicated in my research. A phenomenological approach to professional sound production seems timely as cultural belonging and sense of place can be achieved through a "kinesthetic-sonesthetic bodily basis of knowing" (Basso & Feld 1996, 105).

However, many cultures demand sound to be meaningful and cinema sound often succumbs to these criteria. A particularity of this PhD phenomenological enquiry is that narrative voices and musical metaphors are not considered as the primary storytellers in the interpretation and creation of cinema soundtracks. This is not to dismiss or diminish these components of the film soundtrack but instead to highlight the physical integration of other sonic elements, often labeled sound effects, as phenomenological narrative

forces. At the junction between contextual audio components and the physical processes in use to control them, lies the notion of cinematic silence as sound effects.

For musician and film theorist Bela Balász, silence exists only 'where sounds can be heard' (1972, 205). Contextual silence pins us to the back of our cinema seats or propels us forward. Volume mapping and subtle frequencies are used to generate cinematic silences also labeled as "room tone", or "atmospheres". In movie productions this audible state is often avoided as it rarely matches the commercial intentions of film producers: music becomes filler for the spaces "in between". The commercial belief that silence is at once an obligatory 'presence or absence of something' translates in an incomprehension of inaudible silences as narrative and spatial tools.

Silence, as an absence of digital information, is virtually banned from mainstream cinematic sound production. Shoma Chatterji notes that if a deliberate pure silence were inserted into the soundtrack of a mainstream movie screened in India, the lack of the permanence of sounds would depart from the acoustic habituation that audiences are exposed to in their daily lives (2003, 105). Chatterji adds that the audience would suspect an occurrence of a mechanical breakdown and would shout, demanding some sound (2003, 109).

To obtain an insight an embodiment of silences as dynamic spaces, study participant and screenwriter Roger Monk produced a succinct script based on a short visual scene extracted from the Australian feature *Noise* (Saville, 1997). The resulting written piece was sent to selected Australian sound designers and inspired unique interpretative atmospheric soundtracks. Despite being asked for guidance and opinions on how the soundtracks "should sound" I abstained from giving any guidelines to participants on the style and acoustic ecologies of their creative pieces.

As the experiment did not involve commercial constraints it provided sound designers with a radically different creative paradigm. During the interviews following the delivery of the sound pieces, some important information on the phenomenology of professional cinema sound practice emerged. Amongst many, two of them closely relate to human interactions within acoustic ecologies. Firstly, cinematic silence can be a measure of the creative trust between sound professional, directors and producers. In the words of some participants, to convince producers of the potency of leaving a minimal impact on a track feels like a "victory". It is an experience that requires the physical presence of all parties in the mixing room and therefore heavily relies on the notion of Affect. Secondly, participant sound designers relish the possibility of using silence as an absence of data. Some of these professionals' reactions reveal the level of cultural imposition of having to "listen and view" rather than feel sonic physical spaces.

There is a palpable frustration amongst some of the study participants on not being able to use digital silences as phenomenological narratives and spatial elements. This also points at the reliance on visual data, imagined or not, that cultural awareness to sonic ecologies demands. Some reactions of the exhibition's public confirmed the seemingly intractable link of sound to visions, imagined or not. A sort of interlinked dichotomy appeared, as if vision validated heard or unheard sound and sound confirmed the physical structures of imagery. This practice-based research has provided ways to physically experience the nature of visual imperative in sonic settings and has brought to the fore cultural traits in the context of human spatiality.

[Click Here](#) more information on this research and its generous participants.

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**About the Author:** Isabelle Delmotte holds a MFA by Research (UNSW) and a practice-based PhD Research at Southern Cross University, Australia. Her PhD research examined the relationships between acoustic ecologies and cinema sound design. The research's unique methodology makes it a cross-pollination tool able to reach diverse audiences thus generating an alternative approach to acoustic ecologies and sound awareness. [Website](#)

World Forum for Acoustic Ecology

## WFAE NEWS QUARTERLY



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## WFAE: CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

**September 8-11, 2013 Symposium: Hearing Landscape Critically: Music, Place, and the Spaces of Sound.** Stellenbosch University, Cape Town South Africa. The Stellenbosch symposium marks the continuation of an inter-disciplinary and inter-continental project addressing the intersections and cross-articulations of landscape, music, and the spaces of sound. [Read More](#).

**September 12, 2013 (Deadline) Call for Submissions Symposium on Acoustic Ecology:** Proposals are invited for academic papers, study reports, posters, acousmatic and mixed format compositions informed by nature, sound installations and artistic contributions pertinent to the symposium theme. PhD students and early career researchers are especially encouraged to submit. The Symposium will take place 8-9 November 2013 at the Medway Campus, University of Kent, Kent, UK. The Symposium on Acoustic Ecology investigates soundscapes as complex sounding systems that change in space and time, and shape our understanding of the surrounding world. Soundscapes present analytical challenges relating to perception, spatio-temporal dynamics, effects of anthropogenic sounds on ecosystems, changing acoustic environments, acoustic biodiversity and unwanted sounds. New possibilities for archiving soundscape recordings or manipulating them have emerged during the last few decades, which raised the potential for composing with associative material. For further information on submissions and registration, please visit the [Symposium website](#).

**September 9, 2013 (Deadline) Call For Radio Projects.** "ECHOES programme, we want to rethink and increase the radio role in the present media context. We consider radio a privileged way of broadcasting sound, due to its ability to intervene within local and international communities. Through our strategic partnership with stress.fm, radio covers and broadcasts the program in its whole, promoting the interaction between the audiences present in the events and the ones reached online. Online radio enables us to reach local, national and international audiences that can follow ECHOES program live or through podcast." [Read More](#)

**September 15, 2013 (Deadline) Call for submissions** - Symposium on Acoustic Ecology, University of Kent - November 8-9, 2013. The Symposium on Acoustic Ecology investigates soundscapes as complex sounding systems that change in space and time, and shape our understanding of the surrounding world. [Read More about Submitting](#)

**September 15, 2013 (Deadline) Call for submissions: The Sound of Cultures.** Recorded sound often provides the starting point for creative work within the practice of electroacoustic music. Means of accessing sounds and inspiration from all corners of the globe bring these aural and often so-called exotic experiences closer to us than ever

before. High-quality portable recording technology, file sharing, networking and the Internet have all contributed to this 'easy' access, but what are the ethical considerations here? Should creators of sonic art assume unrestricted access or even proprietary rights over this substantial resource? Where does respect end and appropriation commence? And as audience members, how do we listen and respond to works that borrow, reconfigure and transform cultural/ethnic/exotic sounds? [Read More](#).

**September 23 - October 9, 2013. Sound Development City: Lisbon** Lisbon and Marseille are as the points of departure and destination of this year's expedition, which serves both as a metaphor and an instruction to the participants. The end of the expedition will be marked with a public presentation in Marseille. Nine Projects will be realized during this year's expedition by 13 artists from France, Portugal, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, South Africa, Canada and the USA. They were selected by the Jury – Muda Mathis (CH), Christine Bouvier (F), Manuel Henriques (P), Martin Heller and Gabriel Bachmann (Sound Development) – from 200 project proposals from all over the world. [Read More](#)

**September 30, 2013 (Deadline) Call for authors. Music in the Social and Behavioral Sciences: An Encyclopedia** If you would like to contribute to building a truly outstanding reference with Music in the Social and Behavioral Sciences, please contact Michele Chase, Author Manager, [music@golsonmedia.com](mailto:music@golsonmedia.com). Please provide your CV or a brief summary of your academic/publishing credentials in related disciplines.

**September 26-29, 2013** The LAK Festival of Nordic Sound Art, Copenhagen. [Read More](#).

**September 30 - October 2, 2013 Conference: Sounds, noise and music for re-thinking sustainable city and eoneighborhood.** The conference will offer a platform for interdisciplinary dialog and presentations of innovative research and development in the field of integrating sound in sustainable architecture, sustainable building, urban design and city planning, covering a wide range of subjects from sonic geography, sonic ecology and soundscapes to the noise cartography, noise abatement and recent developments of sound design in general. Special emphasis will be given to the improvement of the Sound environment of touristic places and of the role that Sound can have for city attractiveness and sustainable tourism in cities. [Read More](#)

**September 30 - October 1, 2013 Conference: EcHoPolis.** Athens, Greece. The conference will offer a platform for interdisciplinary dialog and presentations of innovative research and development in the field of integrating sound in sustainable architecture, sustainable building, urban design and city planning, covering a wide range of subjects from sonic geography, sonic ecology and soundscapes to the noise cartography, noise abatement and recent developments of sound design in general. Special emphasis will be given to the improvement of the Sound environment of touristic places and of the role that Sound can have for city attractiveness and sustainable tourism in cities. [Read More](#).

**October 2-4, 2013 Conference: TECNIACUSTICA© 2013** - The 42nd Spanish Congress on Acoustics and the Iberian Encounter on Acoustics - will be held at the Palacio Conde Ansuresz of the University of Valladolid. The technical program will include plenary lectures, invited and contributed papers covering all aspects of acoustics. There will be a technical exposition –EXPOACUSTICA© 2013- highlighting the latest advances in acoustics. [Read More](#).

**October 3-5, 2013 Personal Soundscapes | Musikprotokoll & Kunstradio.** 'Personal Soundscapes' is an online project initiated by the festival ORF musikprotokoll and the radio programme ORF Kunstradio. It motivates students and audio enthusiasts to collect sounds in their personal environments and create artworks from these. 'Personal Soundscapes' provides tools to record and upload sounds with smartphones and will organise a workshop lead by Volkmar Klien. To provide more context to the students' works and the workshop at the musikprotokoll we invite artists working in the field to share with us pieces centering on their own personal soundscapes. A selection of these soundscape compositions will be presented at the festival ORF musikprotokoll from October 3rd - 6th 2013 in Graz/Austria as well as the radio program 'Kunstradio' on Austrian National Broadcasting corporation's Ö1 ([www.kunstradio.at](http://www.kunstradio.at)). While unfortunately we cannot offer you a fee for participation, we – as a matter of course - will pay royalties for pieces included in the Kunstradio broadcast on October 6th 2013. For more information, please visit this [website](#).

**October 4-6, 2013 Event: Functional Sounds: Auditory Culture and Sound Concepts in Every Day Life.** Humboldt-Universität Zu Berlin. The 1st International conference of the European Sound Studies Association addresses issues related to those functional sounds that are core elements in contemporary culture. The conference aims to show and discuss how functional sounds are taken up – as objects of study and as design practices – by artists, sound designers, architects and scholars of art and architecture, by those who study anthropology, musicology and sociology, and to what effect? [Read More](#).

**October 4-6, 2013 Conference: Functional Sounds – First International ESSA Conference, Berlin.** The conference will focus on existing as well as emergent and cutting-edge approaches to functional sound design, sonification, auditory culture, everyday soundscapes, artistic concepts and popular culture. In particular, the conference will encourage presentations that include both theoretical and practical aspects and presentations that address everyday contexts within which sound—in its relation to media, technology, and the arts—is constitutive for new ways of thinking, listening, and becoming. [Read More](#).

**October 5-9 Sound Development City: Marseille** - Lisbon and Marseille are as the points of departure and destination of this year's expedition, which serves both as a metaphor and an instruction to the participants. The end of the expedition will be marked with a public presentation in Marseille. Nine Projects will be realized during this year's expedition by 13 artists from France, Portugal, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, South Africa, Canada and the USA. They were selected by the Jury – Muda Mathis (CH), Christine Bouvier (F), Manuel Henriques (P), Martin Heller and Gabriel Bachmann (Sound Development) – from 200 project proposals from all over the world. [Read More](#)

**October 15, 2013 (Deadline) Call for Eco Scores** -InnoVox is excited to host their first Green Concert that will be centered around environmental awareness and welcomes your involvement! The concert will take place in December, 2013 at the ShapeShifter Lab in Brooklyn, NYC. It will present works chosen from our Call for Scores. We are seeking acoustic, electro-acoustic, and electronic works that will inspire audience members to broaden their awareness of their natural environment through sound. We encourage collaborative submissions that incorporate other mediums, such as film, dance, and other visual arts. With the support of Joel Chadabe, founder of Ear to the Earth, and the Electronic Music Foundation, we are hoping to use our strength as musicians to communicate our love and concern for the future of the natural environment. [Read More](#)

**October 15, 2013 (Deadline) Call for papers.** "It's time to stand on our tiptoes and peer over the horizon. For Volume 24 of Leonardo Music Journal we solicit articles (papers of up to 3000 words) and shorter statements (750 to 1000 words) from artists born after 1975, addressing the impact of emerging technological resources on new aesthetic movements. We are particularly interested in contributions from artists from underrepresented communities. Interested artists are invited to submit a short proposal by 15 October 2013 to Editor-in-Chief Nic Collins at [ncollins@saic.edu](mailto:ncollins@saic.edu). [Read More](#).

**October 18-21, 2013 Workshop: Cetacean echolocation and outer space neutrinos: ethnology physics for an interdisciplinary approach to underwater bioacoustics and detection of astrophysical particles.** (Erice, Sicily) The workshop will focus on the study of the acoustic behaviour of marine mammals, on the acoustic detection of neutrinos in the sea, on the sharing of detection technologies, and on the related technological challenges with a wide interdisciplinary approach. [Read More](#).

**November 8-9, 2013. Symposium on Acoustic Ecology.** Medway Campus, University of Kent, Kent, UK. The Symposium on Acoustic Ecology investigates soundscapes as complex sounding systems that change in space and time, and shape our understanding of the surrounding world. Soundscapes present analytical challenges relating to perception, spatio-temporal dynamics, effects of anthropogenic sounds on ecosystems, changing acoustic environments, acoustic biodiversity and unwanted sounds. New possibilities for archiving soundscape recordings or manipulating them have emerged during the last few decades, which raised the potential for composing with associative material. [Read More](#).

**November 19th - December 3rd, 2013 Workshop: SONIC MMABOLELA** 1st Annual Workshop/Residency for sound artists and composers at Mmabolela Reserve, Limpopo, South Africa. 'Sonic Mmabolela' is a 2-week workshop/residency for professional and semiprofessional sound artists and composers with previous experience in the area of

sound experimentation and field recordings. It takes place at Mmabolela Reserve, in the Limpopo province of South Africa, right at the border with Botswana. It involves field work, studio work and theoretical/discussion presentations. The workshop/residency has a special focus on creative approaches to the work with field recordings, through an extensive exploration of natural sound environments. It does not have a technical character but is instead conceived and directed towards the development and realization of projects of sonic creation by the participant artists/composers with the field recordings gathered. [Read More](#).

**December 1, 2013 9 Extended Call for Special Issue: "Sound, Environment, and Action" *Music & Politics*** The Spring 2014 issue of *Music & Politics* (7/2) will be dedicated to exploring the intersections of music, culture, and the environment as it pertains to politically charged topics. This issue aims to build knowledge around the "politics" of musical works, communities, and practices that share a correlation (consciously or unconsciously) to broader environmental themes. Bringing the topic of "politics" into conversation with "music" and "environment" not only opens up myriad discursive routes, but also raises a multitude of questions regarding the communication of ideas concerning the natural world through sound. For example, what role(s) does music play in environmental activism? In what ways do artists respond to environmental crises? How is the creation of music (from instrument building to performance) tethered to environmental policy?

This call is open, but not limited, to the following topics:

- Environmental justice
- Responses to natural disaster
- Activism
- Environmental crisis
- Physical borders
- Natural environments versus constructed environments
- Resource Management
- Pollution
- Sustainability
- Biodiversity
- Acoustic Ecology

We look forward to submissions that critically engage the "politics" of music and the environment.

#### **Submission Process:**

**December 1, 2013:** Submission of a draft manuscript. The article should be 4,000 to 9,000 words in length. Include a title, full contact details for the author(s), and a 250-word (maximum) abstract. Submissions should be sent as a Word file to Tyler Kinnear, Guest Editor: tkinnear at

[alumni.ubc.ca](mailto:tkinnear@alumni.ubc.ca). *Music & Politics* welcomes the inclusion of images, audio files, and video footage. If submitting supplementary material that exceeds 20MB, contact the Guest Editor to coordinate submission of these files.

**January 2, 2014:** Authors will be notified of whether or not a final paper should be submitted. Information on formatting can be found at: <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mp/submit> All articles will be double blind peer-reviewed prior to final submission for publication. Address inquiries to Tyler Kinnear: tkinnear at [alumni.ubc.ca](mailto:tkinnear@alumni.ubc.ca)

**December 5, 2013 – International Forum ARS CONTACTUS - Dialogical Arts.** Hotel do Parque Termas de São Pedro do Sul, Portugal. ARS CONTACTUS is an international scientific and artistic forum dealing with dialogical arts, that is with the present proliferation of contemporary artists working in close contact with a wide range of real-life connections that go beyond strict artistic aspects, being social, anthropological, territorial, scientific or technological. The forum tries to map new strategies, concepts and techniques for smart approaches to these links between art and life, thus avoiding the common traps of social-correctness, art world elitism or political misuses of public or community-based art works. [Read More](#).

**January 14, 2014 (Deadline) Call for Submissions. Organized Sound: An International Journal of Music and Technology.** Issue thematic title: Mediation:

Notation and Communication in Electroacoustic Music Performance. Electroacoustic Music created in real-time is understood as much by the means through which realisers communicate as it is by its sound pallet. [Read More.](#)

**February 19-22, 2014 Conference: Archaeoacoustics: The Archaeology of Sound, Malta.** Researchers around the globe are now taking note of unusual sound behavior in the world's sacred places and earliest buildings, including Malta's megalithic temples. The question goes beyond: Did ancient people try to control sound? to wondering: Why? Our goal during this event is to pull together information and experience from a wide range of sources, seeking a thread that identifies the most fundamental application of the human experience of hearing. [Read More.](#)

**Apr 1, 2014 (Deadline) Call for submissions Sound in the Land 2013.** Sound in the Land 2014 – Music and the Environment – is a Festival/Conference of Mennonites and music scheduled for June 5 – 8, 2014 at Conrad Grebel/University of Waterloo. This event will seek to explore and discover new ways of hearing the earth, listening to the environment, and creating musical and scholarly responses to what we hear. [Read More.](#)

**June 5-28, 2014 Conference: Sound in the Land 2014** - Sound in the Land 2014 will explore music and the environment while discovering new Mennonite perspectives. As a sequel to the highly successful Sound in the Lands 2009 (which explored Mennonite music across borders and boundaries), and Sound in the Land 2004 (which dealt with Mennonite musical diversities), Sound in the Land 2014 is both a festival with multiple concerts, performances and workshops featuring many musical styles, and an academic conference with papers and presentations exploring the new field of "ecomusicology" (music and the environment) from various Mennonite perspectives, locally and globally. R. Murray Schafer, well-known Canadian composer/founder of World Forum for Acoustic Ecology, has consented to be a keynote speaker. [Read More.](#)

**July 1-4, 2014 Crossroads in Cultural Studies, Tampere, Finland .** The 10th Crossroads Conference in Cultural Studies will be hosted by the School of Communication, Media and Theatre (CMT) at the University of Tampere jointly with the Society for Cultural Studies in Finland and the Association for Cultural Studies (ACS). [Read More.](#)

**Open Call:** Spazioeretti, a privately funded exhibition venue based in Udine, north-east Italy dedicated to sound and space. It is currently accepting proposals for multi-channel sound installations to be exhibited. Works works must clearly focus on the relationship between sound and space, i.e. we are interested in sounds that are evidence of a dimension, a position, a proportion. [Read More.](#)

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World Forum for Acoustic Ecology

## WFAE NEWS QUARTERLY

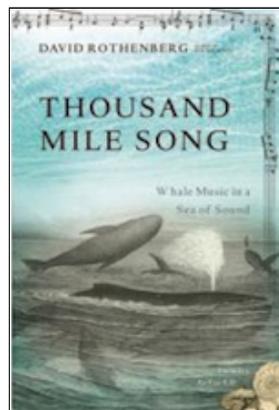


Donald K. Strike

October–November 2013  
Volume 10, Number 4

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**Book: Thousand-Mile Song: Whale Music in a Sea of Sound.** By David Rothenberg. "Musician and philosopher David Rothenberg uses the enigma of whale sounds to explore whether we can truly understand nonhuman minds. Interviewing scholars around the world as they attempt to decipher underwater music, Rothenberg tells the story of scientists and artists confronting an unknown as vast as the ocean. Along the way, he plays his clarinet live with whales in their native habitats, from Russia to Hawaii, making interspecies music that appears on the included CD. Richly detailed and deeply entertaining, Thousand Mile Song is an imaginative look at the most intriguing creatures of the ocean." [Review](#)

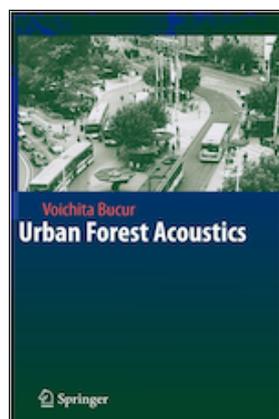
Publisher: [Basic Books](#)

First Trade Paper Edition edition

Date: April 29, 2008

Page: 308 pages

ISBN: 0465071287



**Book: Urban Forest Acoustics.** By Voichita Bucur. "Trees can reduce noise by sound reflection and absorption. This is the first book bringing together the widely scattered literature on noise abatement by urban trees. The book will interest those concerned with environmental management, noise control, and urban forestry. It is an invaluable source of information for environmental managers, foresters, acousticians, engineers, architects, scientists, and students."

Hardcover: 181 pages

Publisher: Springer; 2006 edition (June 1, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 3540307834

ISBN-13: 978-3540307839



**Book: One Square Inch of Silence: One Man's Quest to Preserve Quiet.** By Gordon Hempton. In the visionary tradition of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, *One Square Inch of Silence* alerts us to beauty that we take for granted and sounds an urgent environmental alarm. [Review](#)

Paperback: 368 pages

Publisher: [Atria Books](#); Reprint edition (March 2, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1416559108

ISBN-13: 978-1416559108

Product Dimensions: 0.9 x 5.8 x 8.7 inches



**Book: Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear.** By Steve Goodman. "Goodman explores the uses of acoustic force and how they affect populations. Traversing philosophy, science, fiction, aesthetics, and popular culture, he maps a (dis)continuum of vibrational force, encompassing police and military research into acoustic means of crowd control, the corporate deployment of sonic branding, and the intense sonic encounters of sound art and music culture. Goodman concludes with speculations on the not yet heard--the concept of *unsound*, which relates to both the peripheries of auditory perception and the unactualized nexus of rhythms and frequencies within audible bandwidths."

Series: Technologies of Lived Abstraction

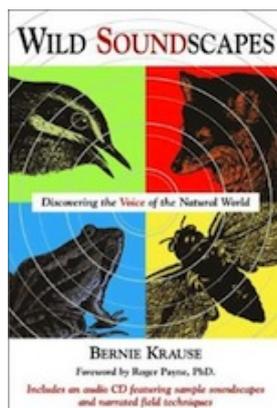
Hardcover: 296 pages

Publisher: [The MIT Press](#); 1 edition (November 20, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0262013479

ISBN-13: 978-0262013475



**Book: Wild Soundscapes: Discovering the Voice of the Natural World.** By Bernie Krause. (out of print but some copies still available). *Wild Soundscapes* is the first comprehensive guide to listening to--and recording--nature. Learn how to tune in to nature's biophonies, or creature symphonies; how to use simple microphones to hear more; and how to record, mix, and play with sounds you gather. Keep it simple or launch yourself into a new creative field. Whether you're an amateur naturalist, novice field recordist, musician, want to create your own natural sound library, or just want to gain further appreciate of the natural world, this is the book for you. [Click2Read](#)

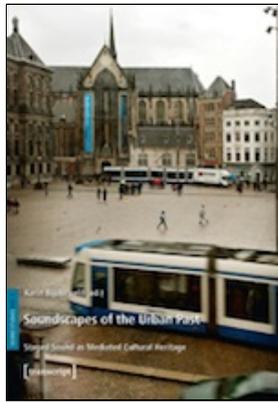
Paperback: 168 pages

Publisher: [Wilderness Press](#) (May 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0899972969

ISBN-13: 978-0899972961



**Soundscapes of the Urban Past: Staged Sound as Mediated Cultural Heritage.** Karin Bijsterveld (ed.) "We cannot simply listen to our urban past. Yet we encounter a rich cultural heritage of city sounds presented in text, radio and film. How can such »staged sounds« express the changing identities of cities?"

"This volume presents a collection of studies on the staging of Amsterdam, Berlin and London soundscapes in historical documents, radio plays and films, and offers insights into themes such as film sound theory and museum audio guides. In doing so, this book puts contemporary controversies on urban sound in historical perspective, and contextualises iconic presentations of cities. It addresses academics, students, and museum workers alike."

"With contributions by Jasper Aalbers, Karin Bijsterveld, Carolyn Birdsall, Ross Brown, Andrew Crisell, Andreas Fickers, Annelies Jacobs, Evi Karathanasopoulou, Patricia Pisters, Holger Schulze, Mark M. Smith and Jonathan Sterne."

[Click2Read](#)

March 2013, 230 Seiten

ISBN: 978-3-8376-2179-2



**Journal of Sonic Studies:** "The main purpose of Murray Schafer's work was to study the dynamic interaction between the sonic environment, the socio-cultural milieu, and the individual listener as well as the (conscious and unconscious) effects sound has on human behavior. This might be regarded as the purpose of sonic studies in general today and it is also the primary aim of the Journal of Sonic Studies (JSS): how can we understand the impact and importance of sound, both on an individual and a general cultural level? JSS thus provides a platform for theorists and artists who would like to present relevant work regarding the sonic environment."

[Click2Access.](#)



**Stockholm Sounds (App Site):** "Stockholm Sounds – a whole new way to discover the city. Are you ready to be among the first to test a new travel guide? Do you love music and are curious about new games and challenges? Then the smartphone application, Stockholm Sounds, is your perfect travel companion. It will take you to unexpected places and offer gaming experiences you can only get with this app – a one of a kind way to discover Stockholm."

"You will be given missions to carry out, questions to answer and puzzles to solve – everything on the theme of Stockholm's music and sound. Each activity is based on a selected location around the city: from the airport to the rock scene, from the record shop to the bar and on to the museum."

Stockholm Sounds is full of opportunities and can be used free of charge without WiFi or data roaming. The app is currently available as a beta version for iPhones.

[Click2Access](#)



**Stress.fm** (Internet Radio). This project in Lisbon is presenting a variety of interesting programs about urban life and soundscape. One is called "Echoes - Experiences of Listening and Place". Currently on (<http://www.stress.fm>) they are streaming works until about 4am GMT and at 7pm there will be a live broadcast of a concert by 'unlikely places'. Elsewhere on the website [Raquel Castro](#) has panel discussion (recorded/spoken in Portuguese) on soundscape. [Click2Access](#)



**Video: If Wilderness Could Speak.** (US National Park Service) If the wilderness could speak, what would it say? At Olympic National Park the wilderness doesn't just speak...it sings! Enjoy the symphony of nature in one of the most acoustically diverse wilderness areas of the country as we follow the wilderness cry from the alpine region of the Olympic Mountains down through the canopies of the old growth forests and temperate rainforest into the raging waters of the wilderness coast. With 95% of its land a designated wilderness, Olympic National Park protects a unique and endangered resource: natural sound. [Click2View](#)

**The Lifting of Tower Bridge.** (Sound Files ) "Five recordings made during 2013 of Tower Bridge being lifted on different days. All but one are from locations normally inaccessible to the public." [Click2 Read](#).

**Festival City** (Apps) Composer Tod Machover's interactive web site, coordinated with the Edinburgh Festival City project includes "Constellation breaks the sounds into short segments, and analyses them according to similarities in their sound quality, loudness or shape. Each one becomes a little dot on the screen. You can drag your mouse over them, and it connects them depending on where your mouse is and how fast it's moving. The second app, Cauldron, allows users to mix and develop the sounds in a different way. Both apps allow anyone unfamiliar with traditional music notation to compose and play with sound. Users can also save their compositions and share them with others, to be re-edited and worked on ad infinitum." [Click2Explore](#)

**British Library: Sound Maps.** Visitors are encouraged to use interactive maps to explore nine different sound clusters, including Music from India, Wildlife recordings, and Accent and Dialects. "The Soundscapes section is a real treat and includes over one hundred ambient soundscapes ranging from Polish woodlands to an industrial landscape in Ukraine." [Click2Explore](#)

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World Forum for Acoustic Ecology

# WFAE NEWS QUARTERLY



Donald K. Strike

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## WFAE: INFORMATION

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The [World Forum for Acoustic Ecology](#) (WFAE), founded in 1993, is an international association of nine affiliated organizations that share a common concern with the state of the world's soundscapes. Our members represent a multi-disciplinary spectrum of individuals engaged in the study of the social, cultural and ecological aspects of the sonic environment.

### ✦ WFAE AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

|                                                        |                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <a href="#">American Society for Acoustic Ecology</a>  | contact-asae@wfae.net  |
| <a href="#">Australian Forum for Acoustic Ecology</a>  | contact-afae@wfae.net  |
| <a href="#">Canadian Association for Sound Ecology</a> | contact-case@wfae.net  |
| <a href="#">Forum fuer Klanglandschaft</a>             | contact-fkl@wfae.net   |
| <a href="#">Hellenic Society for Acoustic Ecology</a>  | contact-hsae@wfae.net  |
| <a href="#">Finnish Society for Acoustic Ecology</a>   | contact-fsae@wfae.net  |
| <a href="#">Foro Mexicano de Ecologia Acustica</a>     | contact-mfae@wfae.net  |
| <a href="#">Soundscape Association of Japan</a>        | contact-jase@wfae.net  |
| <a href="#">UK and Ireland Soundscape Community</a>    | contact-ukisc@wfae.net |

✦ **WFAE MEMBERSHIP:** Become an individual or WFAE Affiliate Organization member. Visit the [WFAE Membership](#) page for more information.

✦ **WFAE NEWSLETTER:** Back issues of the WFAE Newsletter dating to 2004 are archived [online](#). Back copies of *Soundscape*, *The Journal of Acoustic Ecology* are also available.

✦ **WFAE Newsletter Contact:** [wfae.newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:wfae.newsletter@gmail.com)

The WFAE Newsletter is published as a bimonthly supplement to *Soundscape*, *The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*. Any content included in this newsletter site and/or opinions expressed therein do not necessarily reflect the views of the World Forum For Acoustic Ecology and remain solely those of the author(s). Web links and published material has been included only for ease of educational reference and informational purposes.

### ✦ WFAE Volunteer Newsletter Staff

- Gary Ferrington, WFAE Secretary, Editor
- Meri Kytö, WFAE Co-Vice President, Contributing Research Editor

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As founding members of the WFAE retire from their leadership positions in the WFAE, new members are taking on these roles and learning how the organization works. Last year Hildegard Westerkamp retired as founder and editor of our annual journal and we are happy to announce that Dr. Phylis Johnson, Professor of Media Practice and Studies at Southern Illinois University, as the Editor-in-Chief for *Soundscape*. In her interim role Phylis was instrumental in publishing the 2012 edition of the Journal. Phylis is now working with guest editors Makis Solomos and Kostas Paparrigopoulos, on the 2013 issue, due for publication before the end of the year. The 2014 edition of the Journal will be guest edited by members of the ASAE.

As the WFAE moves forward into its third decade, I'm optimistic that it will continue to grow and evolve as an exciting organization serving the needs of its diverse membership worldwide.

When I last reported I was co-editing *Ways of Listening, Figures of Thought: A Festschrift for R. Murray Schafer on the Occasion of his 80th Birthday* with my colleague and fellow WFAE member, Sabine Breitsameter. With a diligent, collaborative team of students from the Hochschule Darmstadt in Germany and a team of North American ASAE and CASE members, we coordinated and produced, within two months, this beautiful publication honoring Schafer's life and work. We thank the Hochschule Darmstadt for essential support for the publication.



The Stratford Summer Music Festival hosted a tribute dinner and concert on Thursday, July 18th, honoring Murray Schafer on his 80th birthday. Along with the dinner and performances of six of Murray's compositions, many friends and colleagues gave short speeches. Sabine Breitsameter and I presented Murray with his [Festschrift](#), along with a copy of the latest issue of *Soundscape: The Journal of Acoustic Ecology*. His wife Eleanor reminded everyone that this day was also [World Listening Day](#). The audience was both appreciative and impressed that we, a German and an American, produced the Festschrift and traveled so far to honor Murray. I learned that most Canadians know Schafer for his musical achievements, as a composer not for his historic breakthrough in starting acoustic ecology. More than 35 years after the publication of *The Tuning of the World*, and 20 years after the founding of the WFAE, some at Murray's tribute were just now learning about acoustic ecology. (Photo by Irene Miller: L-R Eleanor James, Sabine Breitsameter, Eric Leonardson, and R. Murray Schafer)

For me it was a productive visit. Murray and I talked about what he could do to help increase involvement and activity in acoustic ecology in Canada and beyond. We discussed this further at lunch the next day, with Carol Weaver whom we met at the 2012 Global Composition conference in Dieburg, Germany. She is organizing a conference at the University of Waterloo (Ontario, Canada) called [Sound In the Land](#), to be held in early June 2014.

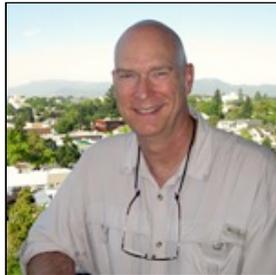
[As a side note: Individuals interested in how to obtain a copy of the Festschrift for R Murray Schafer should email [festschrift@wfae.net](mailto:festschrift@wfae.net) for details. It is a rewarding historical overview of Schafer's contributions to the field and will be of value to anyone interested in expanding discourse of sound, listening, and environment and the future of acoustic ecology will benefit from reading her thought-provoking essay. The 72-page publication features statements by 25 notable, internationally respected writers, designers, scientists, educators, and artists who know and have been inspired by R. Murray Schafer's work.]

While working on the Festschrift I simultaneously attended conferences and gave presentations in Europe and the US including one at the New England Forum for Acoustic Ecology in Boston, and at the Embassy of Finland in Washington DC. When I attended the [Music and Ecologies of Sound Symposium](#) in Paris and the [Sound Thinking](#) conference in Frankfurt, I was reminded that acoustic ecology has established its place in the international discourse on sound. I am glad that the 2013 issue of *Soundscape: The Journal for Acoustic Ecology* will feature articles from the symposium, guest edited by Makis Solomos, the organizer of the Music and Ecologies of Sound symposium.

Finally, I would like to speak briefly about the importance of individual memberships in the WFAE when no WFAE Affiliate exists near by. It is important that those interested in the field be they in engineering, the sciences, or the arts find a home in the WFAE. I would like to encourage you to join us and I invite you to visit the [WFAE Membership page](#) for individual membership instructions.

I hope you enjoy this year-end edition of the WFAE News Quarterly. I look forward to working with you in the coming year to continue to grow and develop the WFAE as an international leader in the field of acoustic ecology.

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**Header Photo by Donald K. Strike.** Mr. Strike is an Acting Supervisor and Professional Training Development Advisor for Saudi Aramco in Dammam, Saudi Arabia. He travels extensively throughout the Middle East and photographed this rugged landscape while visiting Jordan.

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